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ABSTRACT

This field trip program, a 75-minute interpretive tour and a 90-minute workshop, provides students with the opportunity to explore what it was like for newcomers from many different cultures to move to an industrial city. The workshop complements the tour by bringing the significance of historic resources to life. The tour focuses on the experiences common to all mill workers in the textile industry of Lowell, Massachusetts, both Yankee and immigrant. After an introduction to the two primary workforces in Lowell, students learn about the mill environment and gain insight into the changing nature of work and workers' lives. In the workshop, each student is given a role card based on the life of an actual immigrant to Lowell. Once all the students have been processed through immigration, members of the six ethnic groups find some background information on their group, their homeland, and their reasons for immigrating to Lowell. The final part of the program allows students to take on a role and to introduce themselves as their characters to the rest of their class. The activity guide presents the theme, lists program objectives, provides historical background, and enumerates pre- and post-visit activities. Includes an immigration timeline and a glossary of terms. (BT)

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ED 444 894

# Yankees and Immigrants

## Activity Guide

SO 031 208

Tsongas Industrial History Center

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# Program Description

The Yankees and Immigrants program consists of a 75-minute interpretive tour and a 90-minute workshop. The tour and workshop provide students with the opportunity to explore a common topic: what it was like for newcomers from many different cultures to move to an industrial city. On the tour, students discover Lowell's unique historic resources. The hands-on workshop complements the tour by bringing the significance of historic resources to life in exploration of the topic.

The interpretive tour focuses on the experiences common to all mill workers in the textile industry of Lowell, both Yankee and foreign-born. After an introduction to the two primary work forces in Lowell, students learn about the mill environment, and gain insight into the changing nature of work and workers' lives.

There is an investigative activity in the Working People Exhibit, a restored "mill girl" boardinghouse, which also includes a museum on immigrants to Lowell. This leads students to discover for themselves the common threads which drew people together, creating a social fabric, the pattern of which changes over time.

In the workshop each student is given a role card based on the life of an actual immigrant to Lowell. Once all the students have been processed through immigration, members of the six ethnic groups find some background information on their group, their homeland, and reasons for immigrating to Lowell.

Students discover a great deal about their characters by unpacking their luggage and looking for artifacts that are special to their characters.

The final part of the program gives the students an opportunity to take on a role, and to introduce themselves as their characters to the rest of the class.

# Theme & Objectives

## Theme

The Industrial Revolution was a defining era in American history. All that we consider "modern" was significantly shaped by this period, whether it be in technology, politics, art, culture, or the nature of work itself.

Machines and technology are often the focus when students explore the history of the Industrial Revolution. In many ways, the real story of the Industrial Revolution is the story of its impact on the people who tended the machines and the everyday drama of their lives outside of the factories.

## Program Objectives

After visiting the Park and the Tsongas Center and completing the activities in this guide, students will be able to:

- Identify the two different labor forces in the Lowell mills, and explain some of the reasons why they left home to come to Lowell.
- Describe some of the ways in which mill workers experienced life in their free time outside of the factory.
- Recognizing the richness of cultural diversity, describe similarities concerning why various immigrant groups left their homelands and what they brought with them to Lowell.
- Describe some of the ways in which immigration continues to affect our lives today.

# Immigration Time Line

**1822** Led by Hugh Cummisky, 30 Irishmen walk from Charlestown to Lowell to build canals and mills. They camp near their work in an area called the "Paddy Camp Lands." This area later becomes known as the Acre.

**1823** Mill agents begin recruiting young women from New England farms to work in the mills. The women live in boardinghouses run by the corporations for which they work.

**1840s** Waves of Irish immigrants come to Lowell fleeing starvation from the Potato Famine in their homeland. Irish immigration continues throughout the nineteenth century, often after passing through Canada.

**1844** The Ten Hour Movement begins. Workers petition the state legislature to pass a law limiting the workday to ten hours.

**1850s** "Know Nothing" movement flourishes in northern states. This nativist backlash against immigration is caused by Protestant fears about increased numbers of Catholic voters.

**1865** Mill agents send recruiters to Quebec to find new workers. Starvation and lack of work cause French Canadians to leave their homeland and immigrate to Lowell in large numbers. These people settle in a section of Lowell called Little Canada.

**1876** The first boardinghouse for Portuguese immigrants is built.

**1882** Congress passes Chinese Exclusion Act. Virtually no Chinese are admitted until its repeal in 1943.

**1891** The first Greek immigrants to work in the mills arrive. Most are young, single men living in tenement houses in the Acre.

**1892** Ellis Island opens. Annual immigration to the US averages about 1,000,000 over the next two decades.

**1890s** Polish immigrants begin to arrive in Lowell. Fleeing starvation and mistreatment, many hope to return to their homeland. They settle in tenement houses near the mills, and are forced to take low-paying jobs because they do not speak English.

**1905** Greek women begin to settle in Lowell. Many single women take jobs in the mills. Once married, most work in the home, raising children. The Greek community grows stronger.

**1914-1918** World War I disrupts ocean travel and dramatically decreases immigration.

**1921** Congress passes law restricting immigration. Annual quota is about 150,000.

**1924** Congress passes National Origins Act, drastically reducing immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe (14% of 150,000, or about 20,000 annually).

**1950s** People from Puerto Rico begin their migration to Lowell.

**1960s** People from Columbia begin immigrating to Lowell.

**1970s-1980s** Southeast Asians, including Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese begin to settle in Lowell. Most are refugees forced to leave their homelands because of war.

**1990s** Immigration and migration continue to shape the face of Lowell. Many immigrants come from Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, India, Central and South America.

## Pre-Visit Activities

## 1. ??? Who Am I ???

Students play a variety of roles in their lives today. This activity helps students think about the different facets of their lives.

### Brainstorming

Divide the class into small groups and have students brainstorm the many roles people play during the day. Start them thinking about roles in their family, in school, and in the community. As a class, make one list of the roles.

### Color-Coding the List

Looking at the list, establish the categories into which these roles can be divided. For example, you may want to use categories such as family, sports, school, community, church, and scouts. Assign each category a color.

### Making a "ME" Poster

Using the class list of roles, have students find all the roles that they play in their own lives. On a large piece of paper or poster board have each student write his/her name in the center in large print. Draw a ring around the name. Around the perimeter of the paper, the student should write all the roles selected. Be sure to use the color code in completing the poster.

### Comparing and Contrasting

Display the posters around the room. Have students compare and contrast the different roles. Facilitate a discussion on their findings.

## 2. Playing a Role

When students come to the workshop, they are asked to take on the role of an immigrant who came to Lowell. This activity gives students the opportunity to gather information about another person and to role-play that person in a small group.

### Selecting a Character

Have each student select a character from a book or a person from history. Tell students to choose someone about whom they can locate information. Post the following questions on the board to help students do their research.

- Who are you?
- What is your family like?
- How old are you?
- Where do you live?
- What is your occupation?
- What do you like to do for fun?
- Are you well-educated?
- How well do you get along with other people?
- What is your financial situation?
- Are you usually cool, calm, thoughtful, objective or easily stirred up?
- What have you done that makes you special?
- What makes you an interesting character?

### Role-playing Your Character

Have students form groups of four and interview each group member playing his/her role. Have students use the questions above to get them started, but tell them to be creative in their questions.

## 3. Making Choices and Taking Chances

Over the past 160 years, tens of millions of people have chosen to leave their country and move to the United States. Making the decision to leave family and friends is not an easy one. This activity has students look at excerpts from four oral histories to think about the reasons for leaving one's homeland.

### Using Oral Histories

Copy and distribute the oral histories presented on page 9 of this activity guide. Tell students that these are real people who emigrated from their homeland and came to the United States and to Lowell. While each person has left because of a specific circumstance, the general reasons for leaving are shared by millions of immigrants.

### Discussing As a Group

Divide the class into groups of four students. Have each group read the oral histories and discuss the reasons for leaving. Have each group come up with one word to describe the reason each immigrant moved to the United States. Are there any similarities between the experiences of these people?

### Acting As an Immigration Official

Tell each group to pretend to be an Immigration Panel that must decide who will be allowed to enter the United States. Only one of these four people can be admitted to the the United States. Who should it be? Be sure to state the reasons for your decision.

### Sharing the Decision

Ask each group to select one member to be part of an Immigration Commission. This Commission must make the final decision as to which immigrant will be allowed to enter the United States. The remaining members of each group must present their case before the Commission. The Commission will make the final ruling after hearing the evidence from each group.

**Oral Histories**

• "In my village, there were forty or fifty families and now there are two hundred. The land has not changed but it has to feed many more mouths. That's why most of us left our country. My uncle had fields . . . but when his children grew up, they had to divide it and each one got a small share of the land. They had to earn their living from the soil. There were very few factories; there was a small silk factory nearby but not enough for all of us."

*Demetrios Palavras*
*born in Greece, 1893*
*emigrated, 1912*

• "My father died, and my mother had seven kids, and [there] was no way to take care of that. So I had a sister over here in Lowell, and when I get to be sixteen years old, she told me I could come over and get a job here and send little by little what I was making. That's what I did to my mother to take care of my sisters."

*John Falante*
*born in Portugal, 1904*
*emigrated, 1920*

• "When I was [in Russia] the boys between ten and twelve acted as a lookout for the self defense that every community had. Defending themselves from the Russians, who, whenever they felt like it, made a little pot-run or a larger pot-run, which means just attacking Jews. And first it started breaking their windows, then breaking their skulls and this is what they did."

*Nathan Cohen*
*born in Russia, 1897*
*emigrated, 1912*

• "My family had its own land, you know . . . [but] it got burned when the Vietnamese came in. I don't know who is taking that land now . . . . I don't have anything left. Not even a picture of my father. I don't have anything at all, just a pair of clothes."

*Chanthy Duong*
*born in Cambodia, ca 1960*
*emigrated, early 1980s*

## 4. Making a Move

When your students visit, they will learn about some of the people who left their homes and moved to Lowell to work in the textile mills and related businesses. Many of the people left behind family, friends, and the only way of life they had ever known. *Making a Move* challenges students to think about some of the reasons they would move, and asks them to think about the kinds of things they would bring with them.

### Imagining the Situations

Ask students to imagine that they, like millions of people before them, must leave their homes and move to another country. Why must they leave? What will they bring? Use these questions for discussion:

- What are some of the reasons you would move?
- What would you **need** to take with you?
- What would you **want** to take with you?
- What might you have to leave behind?

### Sharing Answers

Break the class into small groups to consider the questions. One person in each group should take notes, but the entire group must brainstorm to find answers to each of the questions posed above. Assure them that there are no wrong answers. Each student will have his/her own reasons for moving, and each will have different things s/he wants to bring along.

### Presenting the Possibilities

Each group should present its reasons and decisions to the class. Students may want to take on roles and present their solutions as a skit, or as a newscast featuring special guests. Encourage them to use their imaginations! At the end of the presentations, the class should discuss similarities and differences between the scenes presented.

### Packing a Bag

Once students have thought carefully about the idea of moving, challenge them to come up with three things they would take from home if they had to move tomorrow. Then, do one of the following:

- Ask students to pack the items of their choice in a "travel" bag, and bring the bag to class to discuss its contents.

- Have students make a collage or draw a picture of their chosen items. Create a classroom display.

## Post-Visit Activities

## 1. Making a Historical / Immigrant Timeline

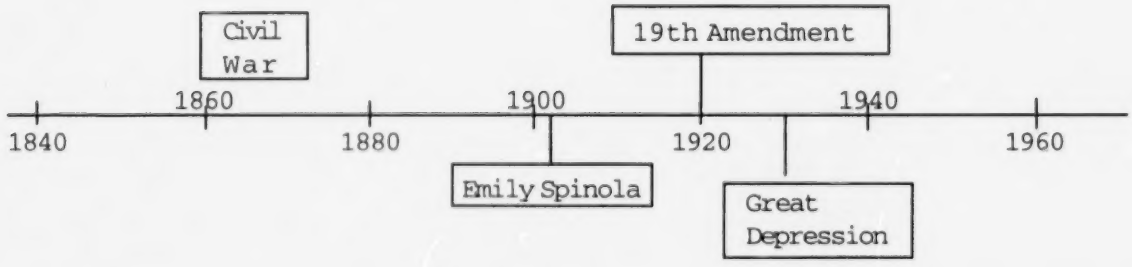
When students participated in the workshop they received a role of a person who came to Lowell between the 1840s and 1980s. Because the immigration activity spans 150 years, students need to place their role character in the context of major events in United States history.

### Researching 50 Years

Have each student review the role that s/he played in the workshop and identify the year of immigration. Then students should research five events in U.S. history that occurred between 25 years prior to their character's immigration and 25 years following it. Encourage students to be creative and look for events other that just military or political events. Suggest that students look at events like the changes in the civil rights laws or a walk on the moon or an important medical breakthrough. If possible, include regulations that affected immigration as one category for research.

### Making the Timeline

As a class, create a timeline that extends around the perimeter of the classroom. Have each student enter the name of his/her role character on the correct spot on the timeline. Then have each student add those events researched.



## 2. Keeping A Diary

### Pretending to Be a Mill Worker

Have students pretend they are fourteen years old. It is 1838, and they have just left their family's farm to work and live in Lowell. You may need to refresh their memories about Lowell mill life in the mid-1800s. If so, as a class, have students list on the blackboard everything they remember about their visit to Lowell.

### Developing a Character

Challenge students to find out more about their fourteen-year-old character. To help them develop their character, ask these questions:

- Why did you move to Lowell?
- What did your family think of your coming to Lowell?
- What do you expect to gain from your experience in Lowell?
- Do you miss your family?
- Do you know anyone in Lowell?

### Writing a Diary Entry

Assign students the task of writing a one-paragraph diary entry about their first week in Lowell. Make sure they include three terms from the list of terms on page 15, and answer the following questions:

- Where do you live?
- Do you like the people with whom you live?
- Where do you work?
- What do you do at work?
- Do you like your job?
- What do you like about living in Lowell?
- What don't you like about life in Lowell?
- What do you hope to accomplish in Lowell?

### Sharing Characters

Encourage students to share their imaginary selves. Develop your own format for doing this, or have students:

- post diary entries on a bulletin board
- have students exchange diary entries with another classmate
- ask students to read their entries aloud to the class
- discuss the similarities and differences between the diary entries
- make a newsletter or magazine using the diary entries

## 3. Climbing your Family Tree

During your group's visit to Lowell, students learned about people who left their homelands and moved here. This activity challenges students to trace their own roots to find out about their family's immigrant history.

### Conducting an Oral Interview

As a class, discuss how to conduct an oral interview for collecting family history. Make a list of questions to use during the interview. Include the following:

Who in my family first came to the United States?
Where was s/he born?
From what country did s/he come?
Why did s/he decide to emigrate?
Whom did this person marry?
What is my relationship to the person who immigrated?
What did this person do for work?

### Tracing Roots

Have students interview family members to discover one person who came to the United States. Have students ask family members about photographs, special holiday traditions, favorite family recipes, songs, and family artifacts from the old country. Ask each student to tell a family story, make an ethnic recipe to share, present a holiday custom, or share family photographs.

### Charting Family Immigration Patterns

Once students have tracked down one family member who immigrated to the United States, have them chart their findings, and look for patterns. Post a large, flat world map on the bulletin board, and have students do the following:

- on a small label write their last name, the name of their immigrant ancestor, and date s/he came this country;
- glue the label to the end of a piece of yarn;
- use thumbtacks to attach one end of yarn near a point on the map where the student lives, and the other end to the country from where the student's ancestor came.

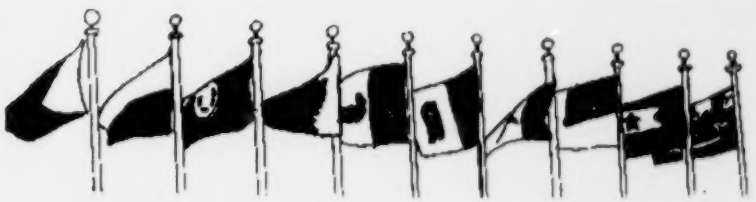
### Discussing the Patterns

Once all of the students have strung their yarn on the map, discuss any visible patterns. What can the students discover about their classmates? About historical immigration trends?

## CelebratingEthnicity

Organize an ethnic festival using the information gathered. As a class, decide how to celebrate. You may want to prepare traditional foods, bring in different types of music, learn various dances, and decorate the classroom.

- Divide students into groups based on ethnic and/or cultural heritage.
- Each group should decide what part its members should play (i.e. preparing food, collecting music, learning dances to teach to the class, decorating the classroom).
- Students should make sure to find out the origins of particular cultural practices. You may want to challenge them to explore the connection between their country's physical environment and the particular cultural practices they choose to explore.
- On the day of the celebration, have students set up a buffet of all the various foods, make labels to indicate the country of origin, and identify the maker of the recipe. Make sure students let one another know if there is a traditional way to eat the food. Have groups take turns playing ethnic music and teaching the dance steps.



## Terms

**acculturation** - The process of cultural exchange between different cultural or ethnic groups in close contact with one another; the influence of different cultures on one another, leading to the development of new cultural traditions common to both.

**acre** - Mill agent Kirk Boott gave this section of Lowell to the Irish in 1831; first settled by Irish, it later became home for Greeks, Hispanics, and Southeast Asians.

**agent** - A man hired by a mill owner to run a mill.

**assimilation** - The process by which a minority culture adopts and adapts traditions of the dominant culture.

**bell system** - Large bells on top of tall towers rang many times each day, telling workers when to begin or end activities, such as eating or working.

**boardinghouse** - Large dormitory-style building owned by the mill owners. Factory workers lived there.

**corporation** - A company which makes cotton cloth or other products. In Lowell, each corporation owned several mill buildings.

**ethnic group** - A group of people, often from the same country, who are united by common customs, traditions, and language.

**immigrant** - A person who leaves the country in which she or he was born to settle in a different nation.

**immigrate** - To come into a new country with the intent of staying.

**Industrial Revolution** - The period of time when people started making products using machines, instead of making things by hand.

**"mill girls"** - Young women who were recruited to work in the mills in the early part of the Industrial Revolution. Most came from farms in New England.

**speed up** - Increase the speed of machinery in order to increase production.

**stretch out** - Increase the number of machines assigned to each worker with the intent of increasing production.

**Ten Hour Movement** - Beginning in the early 1840s, an effort started by female mill workers in Lowell to pass a law limiting mill work to ten hours a day; law passed for women and children in 1874.

**tenement house** - Crowded, often dirty, three- or four-story wooden apartment building located close to the mills. Originally built by mill companies for new immigrants.

**turn-out** - Strike or walk-out; a form of protest used by early mill workers.

*"Give me your tired, your poor,*
*Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,*
*The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.*
*Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,*
*I lift my lamp beside the golden door."*

Emma Lazarus